



## Psyche-Pol

[ phase one ]

This research project was initiated in November 2013 by Howard Slater and Tine Tvergaard as part of the Counter Culture/Social Movements strand at MayDay Rooms. We would like to thank Gillian Woodward and Stefan Szczelkun for their support and participation during the process. We would also like to thank the members of East London Big Flame whose Red Therapy Journal, compiled in the 1970s, has been of integral inspiration to the psyche-pol project. This zine, bringing together research components, was written, edited, sequenced and folded on 29th November 2013 at MayDay Rooms, 88 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH. For future development please visit [maydayrooms.org](http://maydayrooms.org)





*“not just ‘simply’ internal politics  
but internal internal politics  
the eternal external problem!”*

Psyche-pol is a fledgling research-project that works in the space between politics and psychotherapy. We attempt to slowly and sensitively approach material on the subject and gather oral testimony from therapists and counsellors who maintain and are informed by a political impulse. Our working methods are based on our backgrounds in and interests for the therapeutic field. With the open process as substratum we try to explore the material, our conversations and the interviews rather than interpreting them. We ask ourselves questions such as:

How do we overcome the resistance to talking about and through emotion? Is so-called mental illness a response to the ‘cramped self’ of capitalist social relations? Does psychotherapy per se have a normative effect? If yes how can it cast-off these effects? How can we bring the psyche into political struggle as a political object? Can we find different ways of being together in groups that give space and time to both the singularising force of our ‘componential’ selves and to the ‘common resonance’ of affect?

*We me ourselves in a situation of complete distortion  
With respect to our existential experience*

- Mostafa Nissaboury

Psyche-pol methods:

- 1) Check in (Expression of feelings in the present moment bring submerged affect to forefront and enable awareness of others).
- 2) Interview (50 minutes open talk, no set questions).
- 3) Research (Historic precursors, contemporary efforts).

trust to wool and intimacy  
Needs a room of trust

Focus on groups

SELF-DISASSEMBLY  
NODAL SELF

BUT HOW ABOUT THE INVISIBLE  
STRUCTURES WITHIN OPEN-APPROX(HES)?  
perception of visible structures or, communicating  
out to be a material through which  
we discover the depths of our condition  
in a capitalist society. This is why therapy  
is political. = psycho-pol (!!)

interpretation  
pre-judgement

mind  
history  
analysis  
MOUSE FORMATIONS  
AXIOMS  
prelominance  
of language  
as narrowing  
down + defining  
of psychic processes  
hinders access to  
full social.

OPEN PROCESS  
exploring rather than capturing  
TAKING SHAPE - DISSOLVE

MOLECULAR

BECOME MINOR  
COMPONENT PARTS

How to create an open language?

But what about Frame? Borders? Skin? Safety? Anxiety?  
SET UNDERLINES BORDERS IN ORDER TO DISSOLVE.

and using  
membership/personal (set)  
as a way to on the one hand  
depersonalize and on the other  
bond make the individual take  
self-responsibility in the group-field  
and the group-field not make individuals  
the containers of unwanted idea and affect.  
GETTING RID OF BLAME!

Desiring-production

Which is not  
connected to  
the notion  
of lack

improvisation  
free association  
shared sense of  
uncertainty  
((body))

pre-dominance  
of affect as  
catalyst to  
communication  
socialises that  
which is kept 'private'  
emotion as

invisible communication.

make it visible

make it a 'material' -  
share the material  
(social)

depersonalize, politicize  
- detach emotion from 'ego'  
see it as 'pre-individual' affect,  
as an 'experimental state'  
of the body

INTIMATIONS OF INTIMACY

SINGULARISATION THROUGH POROUS GROUPS

## Deleuze & Guattari: Set-Off From Reich

“... At a certain point Reich reintroduces precisely the line of argument that he was in the process of demolishing, by creating a distinction between rationality as it is or ought to be in the process of social production, and the irrational element in desire, and by regarding only this latter as a suitable object for psychoanalytic investigation. Hence the sole task he assigns psychoanalysis is the explanation of the “negative”, the “subjective”, the “inhibited” within the social field. He therefore necessarily returns to a dualism between the real object rationally produced on the one hand, and irrational, fantasizing production on the other. He gives up trying to discover the common denominator or the co-extension of the social field and desire. In order to establish the basis for a genuinely materialist psychiatry, there was a category that Reich was sorely in need of: that of desiring production, which would apply to the real in both its so-called rational and irrational forms.”

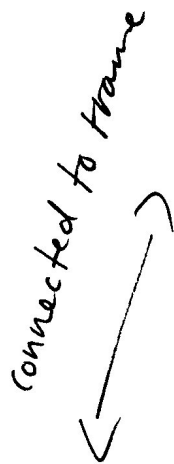
Deleuze and Guattari: *Anti Oedipus*, Athlone, 1983.

## Interview with Stefan Szczelkun (7/11/2013)

Unconscious in relation to change – Tears and the release of emotion – Crying in public as a man – safe enough environment for this – Doing a ‘small dance’ (Steve Paxton) at the bus stop – 1977 workshops in co-counselling – Up to 120 people – Harvey Jackins; ex union organiser – Class oppression as ‘hurt’ – Counselling in front of a larger group – Non academic – Collective building up ‘re-evaluation’ guidelines – Worldwide community – Liberation from a 1000 years of oppression – Disappointments – The ‘wall’ between Therapy and Left Practice – Machismo – Triggered feelings – Uncontained anger – Resistance to talking about emotions – Mass emotional experience of Princess Diana’s funeral – Therapeutic as increasing ‘powers of attention’ – Solidarity forming – What is comradeship? – Feeling ok to talk of ‘personal’ things – Laughter, crying, shaking, yawning, excited talking – How to act politically more effectively... How did capitalism impact the life of your parents?

CREATING A FRAME

- What does it mean to have a frame?
- How to differentiate between frame and border?
- When is border needed? Is border needed?
- What does border have to do with "safety"?
- How to critique "creation of borders" through
- And still acknowledge peoples need for safety?



critiquing  
axiomatic structures of capitalism.  
(O&S) Borders? Frames.

FACILITATOR vs. THERAPIST  
(THIS RELATION)

## Gilles Deleuze: On The Guattari Group

Guattari's formula, "we are all groupuscles," indeed heralds the search for a new subjectivity, a group subjectivity, which does not allow itself to be enclosed in a whole bent on reconstituting a self (or even worse, a superego), but which spreads itself out over several groups at once. These groups are divisible, manifold, permeable, and always optional. A 'good' group does not take itself to be unique, immortal and significant, unlike a defence ministry or homeland security office, unlike war veterans, but instead plugs into an outside that confronts the group with its own possibilities of nonsense, death and dispersal "precisely as a result of its opening up to other groups."

Extracted from 'Three Group-Related Problems' by Gilles Deleuze. This text in 'Desert Islands and Other Texts' is Deleuze's preface to Guattari's *Psychanalyse et Transversalité* (1972).

## Our Investigative Focus on Group Therapy (12/11/2013)

Psyche-Pol seems to be taking an interest more in group therapy situations and theories. Why is this? Well, in terms of political activism and revolutionary groups and organisations, it's all about coming together in collectives. Perhaps this coming together is taken for granted as something unproblematical and in which conflicts are experienced through the filter of ideas and aims, of structures and communications with a wider public.

However, when people come together there is an undeniable affective element that effects our 'being together in groups'. Such situations are always, as Foulkes suggests, a matrix of unconscious communications: 'the internal of the internal' is just as much at play as that which is manifestly expressed. These forms of communication (informed by intra-psychic processes) have an often indiscernible effect upon us in that we can be highly permeable, suggestible and come to respond and interact at a level that it 'out of awareness'.

Responding at a level that is 'out of awareness' often means we are responding without knowing what informs our response. We may be responding to specific others in the group or to facets of the group dynamic that belongs to no one person in particular (Agazarian refers to this as the 'invisible group'). Being able to discern such 'out of awareness' responses (and being aware of emotional bodily reactions) is, maybe, to bring the 'molecular' dimension of affect into play; a dimension that, being in some ways unformed 'personal' material (a magma or larvae), is less worked-through and itself 'out of awareness', highly charged and at times explosive.

This 'molecular' dimension of affect is explosive in that it enters into tension with those identities and roles ('cramped self') that are allotted and are self-allotted to people in order to carry out an 'aim'. This 'molecular' dimension of affect, as that which, in a sense makes of the self something componential, something both 'pre-individual' and 'plural', could thus be said to undermine the very notions of the self and identity and, when these latter are sought to be expressed in the group situation, the result can be a frustration (emotional acting out) that puts the stability and efficacy of groups at risk.

A psyche-pol problem, then, is how these molecular dimensions of affect can be discerned, understood and used, materially, as forms for singularising (as idioms of self rather than maintainers of the 'cramped self') without potentially jeopardising group cohesiveness. The explosiveness of this 'material' is, when highlighted in a group situation, just as much an indication of the effects of capital upon us (individualisation, oppression, 'hurt', being equivalent and/or special etc.), as are those more theoretical and empirical explorations of social oppression. In other words, this material, at times bearing the trace of trauma, makes the "psyche an object for political analysis and action".

Hence, once more, the need for a safe boundaried place, a frame, to handle the explosive material ('uncontained emotion'). Maybe there is also the need for a recognition that the psyche is social, that the psyche is not confined to the individual. Perhaps being in a group situation profiles the 'psyche' as an object? A socialised psyche? Foulkes again: "mental processes as multipersonal phenomena".

This leads to the question of whether group therapy can provide collectivities with the means to become 'Zones of Emotional Development' (Newman and Holzer) and/or compose militant subjectivities as a fledgling 'Affective Class' (Walter Benjamin)?

CRUEL OPTIMISM - CAPITALISTIC DESIRE CONNECTED TO THE NOTION OF LACK  
WHAT IS THE ILLUSION WE CREATE AMONG OURSELVES?  
LONELINESS, INDIVIDUALISM

Fear of loss of EGO



Protection of EGO



persecution anxiety



GROUP ILLUSION

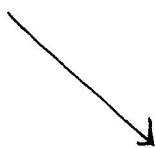
REACTION



Keeping quiet  
(EXILE)



take the role  
of the leader



creating  
(invisible) subgroups.  
(see Agazarian)

AUTONOMY COMES THROUGH WORKING WITH ONE'S AUTHORITY-issues  
WHO CARRIES THE ROLE OF THE AUTHORITY?



Whatever the experience of optimism is in particular, then, the affective structure of an optimistic attachment involves a sustaining inclination to return to the scene of fantasy that enables you to expect that this time, nearness to this thing will help you or a world to become different in just the right way. But, again, optimism is cruel when the object/scene that ignites a sense of possibility actually makes it impossible to attain the expansive transformation for which a person or a people risks striving; and, doubly, it is cruel insofar as the very pleasures of being inside a relation have become sustaining regardless of the content of the relation, such that a person or a world finds itself bound to a situation of profound threat that is, at the same time, profoundly confirming.

# EXPLORE YOUR SHAME (CONNECTED TO EMOTIONS AND ANXIETY. TRY TO DEPERSONALIZE IT (SHAME) AND AT THE OWN OWN FEELINGS.

shame and embodied capital

GETTING BLAME / RID OF making others guilty as projective act of riding self of its own form of embodying capital

TRAINING IN SELF (CUTAINMENT WITHOUT GUILT

Freedom: to be a de-individualised singularity

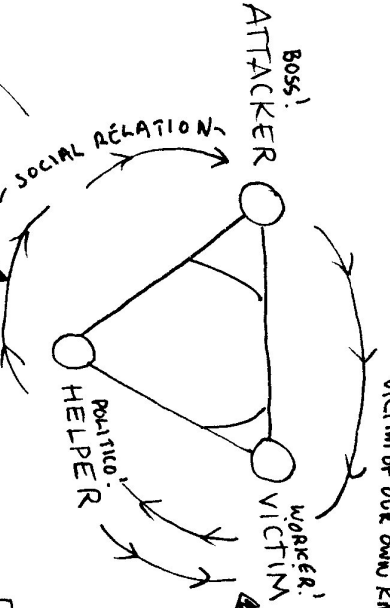
(capital as 'embodied') - embodying a role or identity to make self-value = value-form internalised = enocolonialism = I = value

"... Transindividual: an impersonal zone of subjects that is simultaneously a mediator of intimate dimension of the collective itself" — Muriel Nazzari on Simondon p. 51-52

How to look at the psyche as political and social without taking the role as the victim?

victim is person as 'identity'? ALLEGORISED BY FIXED IDENTITY / VALUE

Victim of our own knowability



How this be a form of capitalist social relation?

How to apply this model into analysis of Capitalisms?

(latent) (fuss) intra-psychic processes inform inter-psychic communication (manifest) (CS)

SITUATION IS ALWAYS A 'MATRIX' OF VCS communicating individual — ie no purely individual — "we are members" — J. Riviere

STEP OUTSIDE OF THE SITUATION. LOOK AT IT.

acceptance of psyche as social and/or reality of VCS dynamics as constantly inflecting each self

CHANGE OF A LOOSE THE IDEA SPACE INTO A SAFE SPACE AND [risk having no 'identity' ?] BECOME "IDOM OF EXPRESSION" (Bellas) "retroactive self" (Abis Nandy)

WORKING WITH BORDER-SETTING.

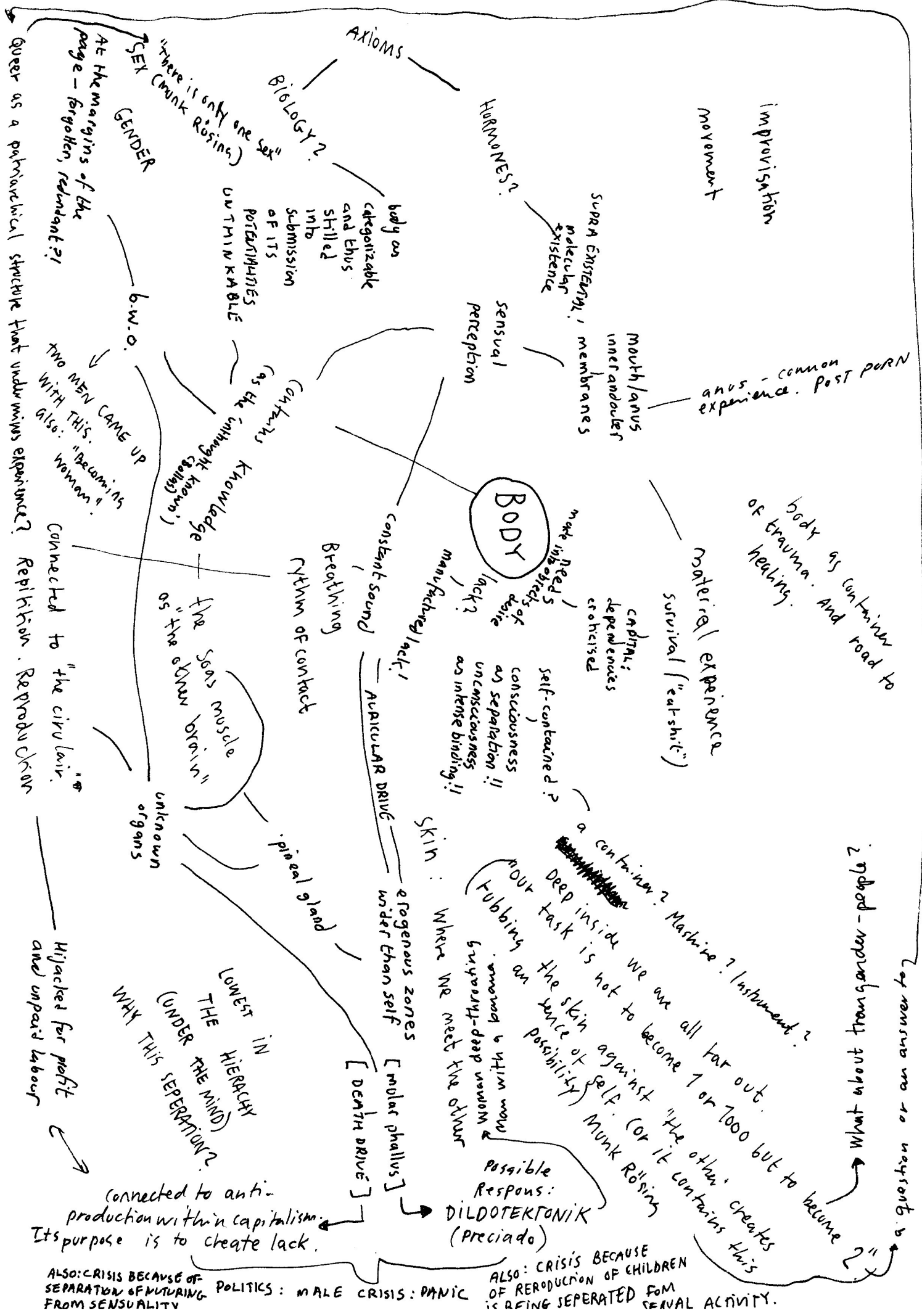
FRAME FORM SKIN

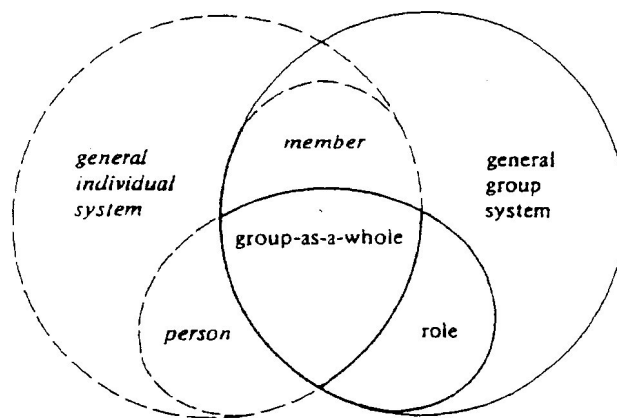
FOULKES: Theory of group matrix — consider 'mental processes interacting, not persons' ie transpersonal processes

You can depersonalize them. Making the psyche analysis + action. [discriminate & affect] where (emotions) but still owning (affects that without words) an object for political

Body as intelligence

Knowledge in the body  
connect body to mind  
unfold, unfold, unfold  
rather than analysis  
stress of trying to understand  
when 'answers' can come  
from within the unfolding process





*Figure 3.2 The visible and invisible group*  
Source: Agazarian and Peters (1981)

## Interview with Gillian Woodward (15/11/2013)

Mix class background – strong sense of injustice – anti convention – personally challenging school structures – A.S. Neil and Summerhill, Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* – CND marches of late 50s – Always interested in psychotherapy; 'what's underneath' – Two months in Algeria 1965; direct experience of colonialism – Donald in Paris – Situationists, King Mob, Anti University, Dialectics of liberation – Single parent in 1966 – challenge to the family – communal living, more help – Laing, Cooper, Anti-Psychiatry – Diggers in Wales – the politics of everyday life – Vaneigem – Women's Liberation Movement, Claimants Union – 'Trained to be outside the system' – Work with Inner London Education Authority; co-ordinating international education projects – Qualified as a therapist and worked in a day therapeutic community – the change from an educational career to the therapeutic felt uncomfortable – from macro to micro – integrative psycho-therapy, socio-drama – help people to become 'whole' – (space and time) for integrating different aspects of being human – space for co-creating – Yet, denial of the psyche in politics? – 60s disdain of handing oneself over to the 'psychic police' – split-off emotion – usefulness of the circle for groups; on an equal level – the 'check-in' – means for containing emotions in groups – psycho-drama and 'reverse role' techniques – trans-generational therapies; Ancestor Syndrome – Experience in Large Groups (at the Institute of Group Analysis) – Transition Town movement have a strong accent on psyche as part of their organising...

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# WHY

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When we started meeting as a group in summer 1974, most of us were politically active. We all see ourselves as revolutionaries carrying on anti-authoritarian traditions that sprang for us in the students/workers/womens movements of the late 60s.

Some of us have been active in our jobs - several as teachers, a hospital porter, filmmaker, building worker, social worker, etc. Others have intervened actively in other working situations - in groups regularly leafletting Fords, Dagenham and Lesneys, the toy manufacturers, for example. The women in



particular have been active in situations affecting us and the communities we live in - running a food co-op; a playgroup; a local festival; the National Abortion Campaign; squatting and housing actions. Most of us have been in political groups - C.P., I.S., and several in Big Flame. Most of the women have been active in and identify with the women's movement; the men have been increasingly identifying with a small but emerging anti-sexist men's movement.

At one time of another, all of us had come to feel the need for some kind of therapy, either because we were desperate and needed help; or because we more consciously felt the need for changes in ourselves and in the way we lived our own lives, that went along with the wider changes we wanted to see in society.

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# RED

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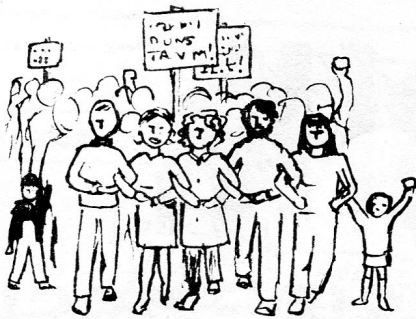
Some people in the group wanted to explore the borderline between politics and therapy, to see how therapy and politics could be relevant to each other, and what the relationship between the two could be in our lives and activities. Others saw themselves as people on the left who wanted to do therapy together.

In writing this pamphlet we have tried to put ourselves in some historical and political perspective, as well as describing the concrete and specific problems of getting a self-help, leaderless group together.



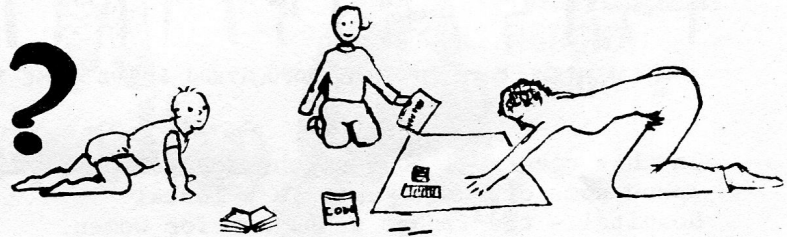
We believe that there are a lot of people who are trying to work out some synthesis of the personal and the political in their lives, who feel the need for some kind of self exploration or therapy, but in non-oppressive circumstances, under their own control. We also believe that there are many people who want to change the overall structure of society, but who are alienated and oppressed by most current forms of left-wing activity. We are trying to survive within capitalism, as well as trying to organise and struggle against it.





The process of bringing this pamphlet out has been very confused and contradictory. It has taken ages. It isn't a totally collective effort (though it's as near as you usually get) and it isn't completely representative. A whole number of different people have worked on it, written and rewritten sections. Some of us have done a lot, some haven't wanted to do anything on it at all. We have had to deal with different levels of expertise and confidence in writing, layout, general articulacy. Some have dropped out after a period of intense activity. Some have come in later to pull it through and out into the world. It feels like the longest birth primal of our history.

# THERAPY ?



"Therapy is for fighting internalized capitalist ideology."



We have had many long and intense discussions about what we're doing, often very interesting but much too broad for the pamphlet. We have had many frustrating hours waiting for other people to turn up to work. In one another's company we-sometimes feel confused about whether to get into our feelings, have a good time or get down to work on the pamphlet. Our internal ideology has no good directives on this problem. Sometimes people have felt that working on the pamphlet was a political 'duty' (bad word) and reacted against it. It was strange at first to be 'talking about' a lot together, trying to talk inside and outside our experience at the same time. Others have felt very good about 'going public' - and had more energy for it.

We don't see or offer up Red Therapy as a model for what other groups can be, but we hope that people facing similar problems and contradictions can gain strength from our experience.

Since we started writing this pamphlet, a lot has changed. The mixed group now meets very rarely, the men's group has dissolved as a group doing therapy for itself (though we helped to start another 'autonomous' Red Therapy men's group); and the women's group continues to meet regularly. Our ideas have developed, and if we started writing this pamphlet now we would add some things and say some things a bit differently. But as it is, this pamphlet represents an important part of our history - which we want to stand by and which we want to share.

"The problem about the word therapy is that it connotes sick people 'getting better'. I'm not 'sick'. Deep down I'm a healthy person trying to find my power. - The power I need to live my life to the full and confront this sick society. The 'sickness' is the lies I have been taught about myself to make me conform to their rules."



## On Systems Centred Practice (21/11/2013)

Many theories of group therapy seem to work with the concept of the 'group-as-a-whole' and in this way differentiate from the more common sense of groups being seen and related to as simply the sum of their individual parts. Foulkes calls this the 'group matrix', and Guattari makes reference to what is called, in the context of his work with Oury at La Borde, 'institutional analysis'.

Systems Centred Practice (SCP), as developed by Yvonne Agazarian, is no exception to this. The 'group as a whole', then, is a relational entity that becomes, for the SCP therapist, a means of identifying and working with what could be called unconscious group dynamics (that which is 'out of awareness'). For Bion such dynamics would include the 'flight/fight' response to being in a group, a 'pairing' response and a 'dependency' response. These responses, termed 'basic assumptions', by Bion can maybe be best described as responses to group-as-a-whole conflicts that emanate from a more individualist response: the threat to our 'self' integrity (and bounded sense of identity) often comes under threat in groups and this 'feeling threatened' can lead to the need to withdraw and remain silent, the need to conform to a group-generated consensus, the need to take power and assert control etc.

Likewise, excessive hopes in belonging to the group (or groups with an overarching work-aim) can lead to 'splitting off' of more negative affects and to both an 'everything's rosy' type of group illusion (c.f. 'cruel optimism') and a kind of realpolitik objectivity. This form of "disguised subjectivity", as Andrew Samuels has had cause to say in relation to political groups, can, if there is no space or time for the recognition or perception of affective circulation in the group-as-a-whole, often take the form of a 'chaotic acting out' within the group, of misplaced aggression, of a making-guilty, as well as give rise to such tried and tested projective functions as creating scapegoats and expelling 'unwanted' parts of the group.

All of this, more often than not, occurs without an awareness of the effects that being in a group has upon each of us; that being in the 'group matrix' may be the source of 'triggers': we may feel 'exposed'; we may fear the judgement of others; we may need recognition; we may relate transferentially to another member, we may be fearful of aggression etc. For SCP such threats to the groups equilibrium need to be addressed as they threaten the main group task as Agazarian sees it: maturation "... a crucial and continuing maturation process in groups is the ability to integrate similarities and differences at all levels, an ongoing task of perceiving the similar in the apparently different, and the different in the apparently similar. For all humans this is a relatively painful activity". This pain is especially felt if, each person, as an identity, has arrived at a sense of self (inherently stereotypical) and belief (ideology) that can no longer be accepting of others in terms of openly exploring these similarities and differences.

SCP addresses this threat of the 'sovereign exception' by turning to the notion of 'roles' (tasks) and by extension to the notion of the sub-group (c.f. 'breaking up into small groups'). This may seem quite obvious but from a group therapy perspective, it wards off one of the main threats to group maturation (in the sense of the group-as-a-whole developing as a supportive and efficacious environment for singularisation processes to take place whilst tasks are achieved and aims approached). This threat is that of individual members becoming 'containers' for the different 'split-off' aspects of both unwanted tasks and, less often perceived, of unwanted affect. This basic lack of affective care (a major component of solidarity) leads to exhaustion, fatigue, burnout, isolation and, at worst, depression.

Sub-groups, then, are for Agazarian, a means of not only carrying out tasks but of framing and containing the affects associated with, for instance, the difficult modulation of similarities and differences in the

group-as-a-whole. Agazarian: “the therapist encourages a conscious splitting into sub-groups and, by doing so, discourages defensive splitting within individuals”. Such defensive splitting can hinder the group-as-a-whole (making it unsafe, unpredictable and threatening) and the sub-groups, as a result, maybe become containers for ‘unconscious group dynamics’ and conflicts to be expressed before these are reintegrated into the group-as-a-whole. How many times has it happened that going into a small group gives a sense of relief and a space to speak more fully and frankly, to freely associate, before returning to the larger group with a less inhibited and invigorated sense of participation. Maybe, in Agazarian’s terms, the sub-groups become places where the ‘invisible group’ becomes visible?

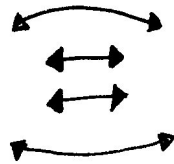
What SCP seems to be aiming for, as an ongoing indicator of maturation in group life, is, for “conflict” to be “contained within the group-as-a-whole rather than within each individual.” If we bring into mind the many splits and dissensions within left groups, then, it is maybe that such conflicts become repressed (individualised) and fester-up as inter-personal grievances rather than becoming socialised through the group-as-a-whole (we must be careful here in our use of the term ‘socialised’ so as not to imply that the group, as a socialising form, becomes a kangaroo court). Here we come to see that the sub-group form has, not only an isomorphic relation to the invisible group of unconscious group dynamics, but it also plays out and makes perceivable a sense of the group-as-a-whole as being made up of component sub-groups. If we take the idea of an ‘affect sub group’, as does Agazarian, then the membership of this sub-group can change and fluctuates within a small space of time. Here she helps us touch on an isomorphism of the sub-group form to the componential level of the self, and that, between the age old dichotomy of ‘self and group’ there is, not only the ‘bridge construct of role’ (Agazarian), but there is also the molecular dimension of affect that effects how we can perceive the reactive similarities and differences within ourselves as well as within the group-as-a-whole.

This affective dimension, which in a sense make of the self a multiplicity of affects, is akin to Guattari’s notion of our traversing ‘unconscious passageways’ between self and group, between groups and intra-psychically. If we can multiply the levels at which we can operate as ‘selves’ (as ‘modal selves’ rather than as ‘cramped selves’) then we not only become sub-groups ourselves, but maybe, through this, we can express emotion and affect (often seen as grievances) as something which is unformed (pre-individual) rather than uniform, and hence making any conflict less contentious and personalised and more able to be integrated into the group-as-a-whole which becomes less of a ‘basic assumption’ group and more of a permeable space that *different*s us and isomorphically brings into purview the ‘social psyche’.

Freely adapted from Felix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution*, Penguin, 1984.

“Individuals as such are manufactured by the capitalist system to satisfy the demands of its mode of production.”  
 “If there is a certain degree of transversality [maximum communication between different levels and above all, in different meanings] ... then the individual will manifest both the group and herself. If the group she joins acts as a signifying chain [free association], she will be revealed to herself as she is beyond her imaginary and neurotic dilemmas.”

AUTONOMY



AUTHORITY

Table 1. Four categories of the interplay between psychotherapy and politics with examples (Totton, 2000)

| Psychotherapy <i>in</i> politics   | Psychotherapy <i>of</i> politics  |
|--|---|
| <p>i.e. the range of interventions by psychotherapists in the political process, through: (1) therapists acting as therapists on the basis of clinical experience and concluding that a political programme or action is required; and (2) therapists acting as citizens, using their therapeutic understanding and skills at the service of a political goal</p> <p>The “Left Freudians” (Ferenczi, Fenichel, Federn, Nunberg, Simmel)</p> <p>Wilhelm Reich and sexual politics</p> <p>The repression of radical psychoanalysts (Ferenczi, and Reich)</p> <p>Jung and the Nazis (Germany)</p> <p>May 1968 (France and elsewhere) and after, including Lacan stopping a public seminar to observe a strike call</p> <p>New age psycho-politics (Schutz, Rogers, Mindell) (USA)</p> <p>Radical therapy, <i>The Radical Therapist</i> and <i>Rough Times</i> (USA)</p> <p>Marie Langer working with the Sandinistas (Nicaragua)</p> <p>Social action neighbourhood) psychotherapy (UK)</p> <p>Social therapy (USA)</p> <p>Anti-psychiatry (Laing, Cooper)</p> <p>Encounter (see Rogers)</p> <p>Worldwork (Mindell)</p> <p>1995 Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility (PCSR) (UK)</p> <p>Emotional literacy (Steiner, Antidote)</p> <p>Therapists and analysts against the bomb</p> <p>Ecopsychology</p> | <p>i.e. “a range of attempts to <i>understand</i> and to <i>evaluate</i> political life through the application of psychotherapeutic concepts” (Totton, 2000, p. 6)</p> <p>Culture on the couch: <i>Civilisation and its Discontents</i> (Freud), <i>Eros and Civilization</i> (Marcuse), <i>Life Against Death</i> (Brown)</p> <p>Power (Rogers, Steiner)</p> <p>Psychohistory and the family: <i>The Mass Psychology of Fascism</i> (Reich), and Marcuse, Fromm, and Erikson</p> <p>Gender and sexuality: psychotherapy and feminism (Lacan, Mitchell), conservative views on gender, Homosexuality and perversion</p> <p>Permissiveness</p> <p>The roots of hatred</p> <p>Racism (Fanon, Kovel)</p> <p>Power (Steiner)</p> |
| Politics <i>of</i> psychotherapy   | Politics <i>in</i> psychotherapy  |
| <p>This includes: (1) the power relations and structures that operate within psychotherapy; and (2) the effect that political systems have in the ways in which psychotherapy as an institution functions</p> <p>Psychotherapy under totalitarianism: 1920s USSR, 1930s Nazi Germany, 1970s Argentina</p> <p>Psychotherapy in the public sector (the medical model, managed care, moral panics)</p> <p>The institutions of psychotherapy: the International Psychoanalytic Association, and the exclusion of Jacques Lacan, institutionalizing psychotherapy and counselling in the UK</p> <p>Challenging the institutions of psychotherapy: 1967 <i>The Passe</i> (France), 1969 The Platform Group (Switzerland, Argentina, Austria and Italy), 1994 The Independent Practitioners’ Network (UK)</p>   | <p>i.e. “the various ways in which political concepts and viewpoints are used to criticize or change the theory and practice of psychotherapy” (Totton, 2000, p. 7)</p> <p>Challenging bias and ideology: feminist and gay critiques, social critiques, anti-racist critiques psychotherapy, the power of the therapist</p> <p>Challenging the therapeutic relationship: mutual analysis (Ferenczi), person-centred therapy, leaderless groups (e.g. Red Therapy, UK), feminist therapy</p> <p>Beyond therapy: co-counselling, transcending the nuclear family (e.g. Actions-Analytical Organization for Conscious Life Praxis, Austria)</p>  |

## Lois Holzman & Fred Newman: On Social Therapy

Social therapy is [...] designed to create emotional (which to us is social) growth. It is a deconstruction-reconstruction of the modernist (that is, capitalist) ontology which admits of no history/history making – human beings are understood to be only who we are. And who we are in late capitalist culture are commodified and alienated individuals, the products of a sick society to which we have adapted. (Marx: “Production does not only produce man as a commodity, the human commodity, man in the form of a commodity in conformity with this situation it produces him as a mentally and physically dehumanized being.”). Transforming this sick society must involve the de-commodification and de-alienation of its human “products.” This is neither negative nor destructive, but rather the positive and constructive process of producing sociality. In social therapy’s process ontology, human beings are both who we are and who we are becoming. And who we are becoming are creators of tools that can “abolish the present state of things” (Marx and Engels) by the continuous transformation of mundane specific life practices into new forms of life. Creating these new kinds of tools is the becoming activity of expressing – in how we live our lives – our sociality, our adaptation to history, our “species-life,” as Marx referred to it: “Individual human life and species-life are not different things... in his species-consciousness man confirms his real social life.”

The work in social therapy is for people to look at what they are doing so as to come to see themselves as engaging in collective creative activity – the activity of becoming. In our culture of commodified “being,” however, “becoming” tends to be related to as a metaphor, at best. Social therapy is an attempt to help people relate to becoming not as metaphor, but as a practical-critical, revolutionary activity. And yet, given our culture, what people tend to do is to commodify activity itself, turning it into “another kind of thing.” But for us, activity is not any kind of thing. Life (under capitalism) is filled with things, but life itself is not a thing. To the extent that people can come to recognize that life is the activity of living – and not the periodic identification (description) of the components of our lives as certain things – they are helped to deal with the difficulties, the labels, the pains, the unhappiness, the distress, the emotional disorders which are inextricably related to the alienation/commodification of human life.

Extracted from ‘All Power to the Developing’ by Lois Holzman and Fred Newman of the Eastside Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy, New York. This article, which outlines a practice of group therapy as a specifically named and practiced ‘social therapy’, was a draft for the Annual Review of Critical Psychology, 2003 (3). The full article, which develops Vygotsky’s ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ into a ‘Zone of Emotional Development’ is available at <http://loisholzman.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/all-power-to-the-developing.pdf>

## ***The Difference Between Functional and Stereotype Subgroups***

### ***Functional Subgroups***

*all subgroups  
join around similarities  
and split around differences*

*functional subgroups  
contain and explore differences  
instead of stereotyping  
and scapegoating them*

*functional subgroups  
join around similarities  
and split differences  
between them*

*functional subgroups  
"contain" all conflict  
within the group-as-a-whole*

*as each subgroup  
discovers new differences  
by exploring the similarities  
within them  
so each subgroup discovers  
new similarities  
by exploring the differences  
between them*

*when the differences  
within each subgroup  
join with the similarities  
between each subgroup  
the group-as-a-whole transforms  
into a new group  
able to work differently  
from the old group*

*re-integrating around similarities  
after deliberately splitting  
around differences  
moves the group-as-a-whole  
along the path to its goal*

*functional subgrouping  
upsets the social order  
by making a place for everyone  
and letting everyone  
find their place  
to make the social system work*

### ***Stereotype Subgroups***

*all subgroups  
join around similarities  
and split around differences*

*stereotype subgroups  
come together  
around obvious similarities  
like black and white,  
male and female,  
them and us*

*everybody knows  
how to make  
stereotype subgroups*

*everybody knows  
what to do and what to say  
to make top dogs,  
under dogs and little dogs*

*everybody knows  
how to keep the ups up  
and the downs down*

*everybody knows  
how to keep the ins in  
and the outs out*

*everybody knows  
how to make scapegoats  
of each other*

*stereotype subgrouping  
discriminates differences  
and won't integrate them*

*stereotype subgrouping  
manages  
the hatred and fear  
that is aroused by differences  
by creating  
a social pecking order*

*by having a place for everyone  
and keeping everyone  
in their place  
stereotype subgrouping  
keeps the social system stable*

Some organisations of interest:

Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility, PCSR (<http://pcsr-uk.ning.com/>)  
Independent Practitioners Network (<http://i-p-n.org/>)  
Gadeterapeuterne, Street therapists, Denmark, (<http://gadeterapeuterne.dk/>)  
Activist Trauma Support Network (<https://www.activist-trauma.net/>)  
Asylum Magazine for Democratic Psychiatry (<http://www.asylumonline.net/>)

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